

PARIS AND THE BIG SHOW

ELIZA ARCHARD CONNER ON THE GREAT EXPOSITION.

All Nations Except the United States Inclined to Be Historical in Their Exhibits—Everything Grand and Impressive.

[Special Correspondence.]

PARIS, March 24.—Eighteen years ago I was in Paris. I am here again today, and Paris smells no better in 1900 than it did in 1882. Wherever you set foot in a Latin race town those same odors indescribable greet you—in Manila, Naples, Marseilles, Paris, all the same—till you wonder whether the Spanish, French and Italians have any nose except in appearance only—whether, in short, the feature on their faces that looks like one is not a mere simulacrum and a spook nose.

The French people are much the same too. Frenchwomen wear the same gentle mustache and beard; Frenchmen, many of them, look as if



UNITED STATES EXPOSITION STANDARD.

they drank far too much for their own good or that of their country. Again, you meet well grown, well groomed figures and fine, clear cut faces that tell of a noble, gallant race, part of which, at least, is not deteriorating.

Beyond a doubt Paris is architecturally the grandest and most beautiful city of the earth. It did not impress me so much in this respect 18 years ago as it does today, but then I was homesick and miserable and had not yet learned to be at home wherever fate flings me. Magnificent buildings greet the eye here wherever you turn, handsome parks and open spaces, broad, sweeping avenues and everywhere ornate and beautiful statues and sculpture. Involuntarily you think of Rome in the days at once of its greatest splendor and greatest degeneracy.

No more noble or impressive spot could have been chosen than that selected for the grand entrance to the exposition. Standing at the gates, you look outward on the historic Place de la Concorde. Directly opposite is Cleopatra's Needle, looking down upon this great 1900 show from the heights of 40 centuries, as the pyramids looked at Napoleon's soldiers or Napoleon's soldiers looked at the pyramids. I always forget which.

All well wishers of France, among whom certainly Americans are, must hope for her that the exposition will bring much prosperity. That will do more than anything else to make the French content and prevent them from brooding over their political grievances. Paris is indeed the most beautiful and splendid of cities, but the French do not look like a happy people. Their faces are anxious and eager, as of those undergoing a strain. But who does look happy, when it comes to that?

The gates of the grand entrance to the exposition are a dream of architecture, with lofty white pillars, a great arch and a shining dome. All the exposition buildings erected by the French themselves are extremely ornate, but the adornment is never overdone. The French race certainly has a genius in ornamentation that is unequalled.

The exposition is partly on the grounds occupied by the last one in 1889, but the present one takes in more ground than the former one did, and yet it does not cover a space equal to that of the Chicago exposition of 1893, only half so much, in fact. For all that, however, it is no small show. The buildings extend east and west along both banks of the Seine from the Place de la Concorde to the Trocadero palace, a distance of a mile and a half. At the western corner stands, like a finger pointing to heaven, Cleopatra's Needle, and a mile to the eastward, piercing the very clouds themselves, is the tremendous Eiffel tower. But the great tower does not mark the boundary on the east. It has been taken into the show, as it were, and surrounded with buildings. Not far from the tower is a Ferris wheel, dear and familiar of old time. A gigantic sign informs us in French that this is a wheel the most grand on the earth. The eastern corner of the ground is marked by the Trocadero palace.

grand entrance about 11 in the forenoon. I walked leisurely, looking at people and things, stopping twice for half an hour, once at the American commission headquarters, the second time at the English commission. When I had completed the circuit and arrived again at the grand entrance, it was 4 o'clock. An electric railway, as at Chicago, will carry passengers through the grounds, giving them a birdseye view of the vast and splendid forest of buildings, a bewildering vision of cream, white and gold, of domes and turrets and statues. One of the pleasantest features of the show will be the travel upon the swift, tiny boats that dart up and down the Seine, carrying passengers. Various new bridges have been thrown across the river, connecting different parts of the exposition, and at these the visitor may embark and disembark with the greatest ease. Whether in the course of the summer the price of a trip upon these, like everything else in Paris, will be raised I know not at this writing, but at present you can travel a long distance upon one of these lively little craft for 2 cents.

Each country has a national building or headquarters for its citizens. These buildings are called pavilions and are supposed to represent phases in the life of the particular country. The city of Paris has a pavilion all to itself, handsome and imposing, but, like so many other parts of the show, lagging in construction. France is unfortunately behind the other nations in exposition work. She has been retarded in many ways. Strike after strike of carpenters and other workmen has befallen her. The fussy and emphatic love of the French common citizen for his country has not stopped him from taking advantage of her in every way during the progress of erecting the 1900 buildings and impeding her to the point of mortification.

The British pavilion will be full of historical interest for all English speaking peoples. It will contain pictures and will be a reproduction of a famous English house of 200 years ago.

"I understand," said a European gentleman to me, "that your United States pavilion will have in it every convenience for the use of its people as their wants are today, even to rooms where they can sit and sip their national beverage of ice water and put their feet upon the table, as at home."

"Did you ever see an American sit with his feet upon the table?" I asked.

The gentleman reddened. "Well, no; I really never did," he answered.

"Well, then, don't make sweeping statements concerning what you don't know."

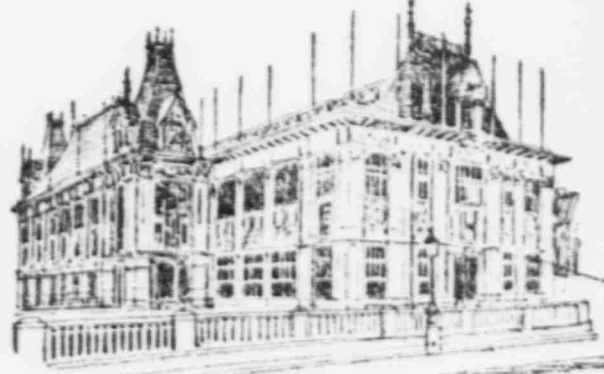
"But," continued the gentleman, "your pavilion will have nothing historical, nothing to show the progress from the past to the present."

"How are you going to show off the past when you haven't any past and are very glad of it? If the United States were hampered with the hand of a clumsy and heavy old past, as some of the European nations are, it would not be the great and powerful country it is today. So there?"

Yes; the United States is lucky not to have a past, but to have free hand to build everything right and new from the start.

The United States occupies more space in the exposition than any other country outside of France. Russia alone excepted. One is glad to be able to say, too, that our part of the show greets opening day with a smiling face, as one who has done a task promptly. An American familiar with the preparations says that if it were not in bad taste it would be correct to say the Americans were more prompt than any other people in getting ready for the exposition. Since it would be in bad taste, therefore, we don't say it, but we are glad it is the fact nevertheless.

One of the most interesting departments in the exposition is that of automobile carriages and vehicles. The French have made great progress in this work of relieving the horse from



CITY OF PARIS PAVILION.

his heavy burdens, and automobile carriages are more common in the streets of Paris than in either New York or London. They are so common, indeed, as not to attract much notice. They spin along the boulevards with a buzz and a rumble like that of a small thrashing machine, and the man who steers toots a horn to warn you to clear the track. They are not so light and graceful looking as an American carriage is, but when you consider that they represent both horse and wagon in one you wonder they are no larger and heavier than they are. The auto car is the coming thing, and a big thing it is going to be too.

There is little encouragement for other countries. The French are enterprising and enterprising. France is the only country that has a large number of automobiles.

industry, science and invention since 1893 the Paris exposition will be an object lesson more valuable than a journey around the world would be. It is to be hoped many thousand Americans will come to see it.

A word as to prices, traveling, etc. It was long since decided that the day of the opening of the exposition prices of living should be doubled in all the hotels and boarding houses of Paris. In some of the larger, more fashionable hotels they will be more than doubled. Ordinarily they are not so high as in America. But for the exposition one may expect to pay at least as much as he would in a large American city. Again, pack your belongings in the lightest trunk you can find, a willow or canvas one. You are allowed only 66 pounds luggage free by rail in France. Coming from London to Paris my big oak and iron American trunk cost me for excess luggage exactly half as much as my fare by rail and steamer.

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